

Treasure Every Minute by orphan_account

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Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Will Byers

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Summary:

The Party (finally) reunites for Thanksgiving.

1. Part One

November 23rd, 1989

Will hit the road with a thud. His tormentors had disappeared, but so had his friends. Everyone had. He heard a rasping, clicking noise and turned sharply. Nothing. Bewildered, he looked around again. “Mike?” There was no answer. He didn’t understand – Mike never ignored him. “Mike!” he shouted desperately at the top of his voice. The clicking was back, and he turned towards it, and let out a silent gasp, paralysed with fear at the massive dark shape that seemed to be unfolding itself, rising above the buildings. *Run!* said the voice in his head. Will heeded its warning and took off. The rasping sound grew louder and he grew colder, even though he was running at top speed. He swerved right down a flight of stairs and dropped to the ground. He drew his knees up to his chin and screwed his eyes shut, praying that it wouldn’t find him.

“Will,” said a distant voice he didn’t recognise. “Will...” Wait. Yes, he did. But how could she be here? “Will!” Strong hands grasped his arms and Will’s eyes flew open with a sharp intake of breath.

“Will, it’s okay!” El’s dark brown eyes were wide with concern and Will looked around his room. Yes, it was definitely his room. He swallowed the lump in his throat, still breathing heavily. “What happened?”

“Shadow,” he said thickly. His mouth was dry. He shrugged his stepsister off him and reached for the glass of water on his nightstand, holding it with both hands as he drank to steady himself. He was still shaking.

“It was just a dream,” she said softly, and Will nodded, avoiding her eyes. Suddenly he became aware there was someone else in the room. Joyce Byers was standing a little way off, her hands clasped together and her lips tight with worry. Will could sense that El had told her to let her handle it. He was glad his mother had heeded her, but now he smiled feebly at her and she drew closer and sat carefully on the bed

next to El. Will finished the water and replaced the glass, feeling a little more normal.

“Sorry I scared you,” he said, his voice weaker than he had anticipated.

“Don’t be silly, sweetie, it’s alright,” she said immediately. “Are you okay?” He nodded slowly.

“Yeah. That... hasn’t happened for a while.”

“How long?” El asked, frowning.

“About three weeks,” he answered truthfully. “The night before you came to Louisville.”

El scowled. “You didn’t tell me?” Will shrugged defensively.

“Didn’t think I needed to. Sorry.” El tutted, but Will could tell she was worried, not cross.

“Jim’s making breakfast. Do you want to get up?” his mother asked. Will nodded.

“I want to shower though.” Joyce nodded, squeezed his arm gently and left the room. El climbed off his bed.

“Halloween?” El asked.

“How did you know?” he asked. She never ceased to amaze him.

“No idea,” she said, picked up her book and vanished. He sighed and shook his head.

Twenty minutes later, he was showered and dressed, and wandered into the kitchen. He gasped when he saw who was at the table.

“Jonathan!” His brother smiled and pulled him into a hug.

“Hey, buddy. How’s it going?”

“Oh, you know.” Will brushed off the question. “When did you get here?”

“About two o’clock last night,” he answered. “It was actually easier to fly to Chicago and come back with Nancy.”

“I bet that was nice,” Will said innocently. Jonathan grinned and swatted his head, which set Will off laughing. This was good; this was normal. He sipped the cup of coffee that had been placed in front of him and took the room in, trying to overcome the memories that had once again resurfaced. The coffee helped like it always did. He had another sip and winced; it was strong, even for him. “Yikes, Hop, how much coffee d’you put in this?”

“Two spoons. That’s what you normally have, isn’t it?”

“One and a half,” he said, grimacing. He tried it again. Maybe he could get used to it.

“Sorry ‘bout that. When are your friends coming?”

“Ten,” said El. Will jumped and looked round. She was curled up on the sofa reading. “Although Dustin’ll be here about a quarter after.”

“Why?” said Jonathan. “I thought this was sacred.”

“Because Dustin’s late to everything,” El said, dog-eared the page and closing the book. Will hummed an affirmative. In high school, Dustin’s punctuality had taken a nosedive and he was late to practically every class except science – and lunch.

“You should have told him nine-thirty,” Will suggested. “That way he might have been on time.”

“Oh, I did,” El nodded. “But he’ll still be late.”

At five minutes to ten, the doorbell rang. “I’ll get it.” Will jumped up from the couch and blinked in surprise as he opened the door.

“Will!” Dustin cried excitedly, hugging him briefly. “How’re you

doing, man? Happy Thanksgiving!”

“Hey, Dustin! Good to see you,” Will said hastily, regaining his composure. He glanced round at El, who looked dumbfounded. “We weren’t expecting you yet.”

“Hilarious, Byers.” Dustin rolled his eyes as Will closed the door behind him, but he stopped when he saw that only El and Will’s family were there. “Where are the others?” he asked, looking at El suspiciously.

“I may have told you an earlier time to make sure you got here promptly,” El said, completely unabashed. Dustin’s mouth dropped open.

“Interesting,” said Will. “In ten years that may be the first time I’ve ever seen you rendered speechless.”

Dustin thought for a moment before saying, “I was going to be offended, but then realised I still arrived nearly a half hour after you told me to come.”

“Game and set to El,” Jonathan said, high-fiving her.

“Where are we gathering?” Dustin asked. “I brought snacks.”

“My room.” Will nodded towards Joyce and Hopper, before leading Dustin and El into his room. Dustin had just set his bag of snacks on Will’s bed when the doorbell rang again.

“Will, oh my god!” Max threw her arms around him as he opened the door.

“Hi,” he said, aware that he was grinning like an idiot. He and Max had become very close friends over the last five years, even though they were so very different, to the point where Max had been the first person whom Will had told he liked boys.

“I heard you had some issues getting home?” She looked concerned, as Will sighed.

“Yeah, I’m taking my car to the garage on Monday. Hopefully they

can fix it before I have to go back.”

“Bummer, dude. But you’re okay?”

“Yeah, I think so. I got really cold, which is never good, but I’m alright now.” The doorbell rang and Lucas was on the doorstep. He gave Will a hug and they chatted briefly, before taking Max’s hand and disappearing towards Will’s room. No sooner had they disappeared when the doorbell rang one final time. Will suddenly felt nervous. *Get a grip*, he thought, shaking his head at himself before opening the door.

“Happy Thanksgiving,” said Mike, smiling shyly.

“Wow.” Will was admittedly biased, but Mike looked *gorgeous*. He was wearing an ivory-coloured button-down under a navy suede jacket, with black corduroys. The temperature had dropped considerably overnight and the cold had tinged his freckled cheeks pink, and the wind had slightly ruffled his waves of dark hair until his bangs were almost falling over his eyebrows. He blushed further at Will’s exclamation.

“Shut up,” he muttered, but there was no malice in it, and the corner of his eyes crinkled. He glanced at Joyce, Hopper and Jonathan, who were poring over a photo album, before leaning down to kiss Will.

“Come on,” said Will, smiling, as he turned around and walked towards the source of the noise that was coming from the other end of the house.

They spent the first twenty minutes chatting and catching up on each other’s news. Dustin announced that he had decided upon studying physics, and that there was an excellent course at Princeton, New Jersey, which he would be starting the following August. El, meanwhile, had been accepted to the Indiana State University to study English, also starting the following year. Will proudly held up a silver medal from a regional athletics tournament he had won a few weeks previously. Lucas had started tutoring at the local high school. Max, who was studying law at Stanford, was observing a murder trial

two weeks after Thanksgiving. Finally, Mike was due to play the role of Anthony Hope in his college's upcoming performance of *Sweeney Todd*, to everyone's astonishment – Mike had attended the drama club in high school for extra credit but this was unprecedented.

“Now that's done,” said El over the various mutterings about Mike being in a musical. “Since it's Thanksgiving, I thought it would be nice if we went around and said something we're thankful for.” There was a generic grumbling from around the room. “What? It's a tradition!”

“Remind me never to teach her anything ever again,” Lucas whispered to Will, who chuckled under his breath. El gave them her I'm-talking-you-shouldn't-be look before continuing.

“I'll start. I'm thankful that we were all able to get together today. I've really missed all of you – yes, I know I've seen you, Dustin – and it's awesome to see you all again.” She beamed and looked at Mike, who was sat to her left.

“I... am thankful for... um...” He thought for a moment. El frowned. “I'm thankful that it's way less cold here than in Chicago.”

“Hear, hear,” murmured Lucas, who was studying in Maine. He had almost had to stay there due to a blizzard the week before.

“Will?” said El, nodding approvingly at Mike.

“I'm thankful that I made it back last night,” he said promptly. Whilst this was true, he actually wanted to say he was thankful for Mike, but although the Party knew about them, he knew Mike could get weird and embarrassed about relationship stuff. It didn't really bother Will, partly because he knew Mike had been that way when he was with El too. The other reason, Mike had once told him, was that Mike's parents absolutely did not - and could not - know they were together, and Mike found it easier to simply keep it under the radar with everyone.

“Hear, hear,” repeated Lucas. “I, for my part, am thankful that my family does not take part in the celebration of the slaughter of Native Americans.” El rolled her eyes, and Will forced himself not to smile.

He had expected this.

“That’s not what it’s about,” Dustin’s voice was stony.

“That’s what it led to,” Lucas countered.

“But it’s not why we celebrate it!”

“Then why do you celebrate it?”

“For God’s sake,” Max groaned. “You have this argument every year! Shut up, both of you. I’m thankful,” she added before they could speak, “for the park near my apartment. I love the city but living here has made me appreciate the country and it’s nice to get away from the noise for a bit.”

“Lovely,” smiled El. “Dustin?”

“I’m thankful for Smarties,” he said, pouring some into his hand before passing the tube around. El looked disappointed but everyone else murmured their appreciation, and Dustin and Lucas’ squabble was quickly forgotten.

They decided on Clue! as their game, which was considerably shortened by Max inexplicably guessing all three cards on her third turn, after having made an extremely accurate prediction the previous turn. She had known what the weapon was from what the others had said, and to her surprise, no one had the cards for the murderer or the room she had suggested. Dustin was incensed.

“She must have cheated!” he kept saying.

“No, Henderson, I just got lucky,” she sighed for the fifth time. “Honestly, it’s probably someone else’s turn, you win almost every time we play this.”

“Not true,” protested Mike.

“She’s basically right,” put in Will. “Either you or Dustin wins every time. I’ve never won,” he added gloomily.

“But you dominate in Monopoly,” said Lucas kindly.

“Luck, mostly.”

“That’s true,” said Lucas, “but you have to deal with the luck you get, and you’re so good at trading and you’re seriously stubborn in the endgame, it’s remarkable.”

“I guess.” Will smiled and started to pack away the board. “What time do you all have to go?” They glanced at their watches and Will’s alarm clock, and Max gasped.

“Damn it, five minutes ago.”

“Really?” Will asked, disappointed.

“Yeah, I’m sorry. Mom wants me to help with dinner.” Will stood up to show her out. “We’re meeting up again before we go back, aren’t we?”

“We could hit the mall tomorrow. There’ll be sales,” Mike suggested. Lucas did finger-guns to show his support of this idea.

“Sweet,” said Max, her eyes lighting up. “Who’s driving?” Will shook his head.

“I can take my car,” said Mike.

“I think I can too,” added Lucas. “Shall we just meet there instead of going in convoy?”

“Makes sense,” Max nodded. “Okay, Dustin and I will get to yours for... between ten-thirty and eleven, shall we say?”

“Sure,” said El. “And Will and I’ll come to you, Mike.”

“Nice,” beamed Max. “See you, guys.” She kissed Lucas goodbye and disappeared.

Dustin and Lucas stayed a little longer, before heading off together

about twenty minutes later.

When they left, El decided to go and hang out with Jonathan, who was back from seeing Nancy with a message for Mike that he needed to be home by noon. Once again Mike and Will found themselves alone. Mike was half-lying on Will's bed when he came back from showing the others out, and Will flopped down beside him.

"God, I'm tired," he said, rubbing his eyes under his glasses.

"It wasn't that bad," Mike reasoned, and Will laughed.

"No, not them. I just... didn't sleep well." Mike frowned in concern.

"Nightmare?"

"Yeah. Halloween night." Mike turned onto his side to look at Will, who was now staring at the ceiling with his hands behind his head.

"I'm so sorry," said Mike gently.

"What?" Will turned his head to look at him, utterly confused.

"About that night." Mike nibbled on his thumbnail. "I shouldn't have left you."

"Oh, Mike, that's not why I said it." Will rolled onto his side and took Mike's hand in his own. "I don't blame you for what happened to me. And even if I did, it was five years ago, and it's all over now."

"Yeah, I know." Will brushed Mike's hair off his face and leaned in to kiss him. Mike responded with enthusiasm, but Will pulled back. Mike almost squeaked in protest, making Will laugh.

"Not right now," he said, his eyes sparkling with mischief.

"Why not?"

"We wouldn't want to crumple those nice clothes, would we?" Mike kissed him again in defiance, intertwining his fingers with Will's.

"You're what I'm thankful for."

2. Part Two

Summary for the Chapter:

The Party head into the city, and Mike and Will try to turn it into a date.

Notes for the Chapter:

Hoo boy. This was fun / difficult / distressing to write, but enjoy. Promise it ends happily.

“El! You ready?” Will stood by the door, tapping his foot impatiently. She emerged from the bathroom, pyjama-clad, toothbrush in her mouth, looking at him in vague confusion.

“What’s the matter?” she asked indistinctly. “There’s no rush today.” Will shifted his weight from one foot to the other and raised an eyebrow. “Oh, you want to go and make out with your boyfriend,” she said, feigning dawning comprehension. Will scowled at her.

“Maybe.”

“Well, go on then. I’ll be fifteen minutes, I’ll see you there.”

“Really?” Will’s eyes lit up. A week ago he’d have sold his soul for fifteen minutes alone with his boyfriend.

“Yes, idiot, go on. Make good choices.” Will flipped her the bird, yelled a farewell to the house in general, and ran out of the door. He grabbed his bike from the lean-to, and pedalled quickly away.

Nancy opened the door and smiled at Will. “Hey, haven’t seen you in ages! How are you?”

“Hi, Nancy, yeah, I’m pretty good. Is Mike up?” She nodded.

“He’s in his room. You guys going out today?”

“Yeah, we’re all hitting the mall in Indianapolis.”

“Sweet. Have a good time.” She glanced around and lowered her voice. “You can go on up.” She flashed him a conspiratorial smile which Will reciprocated awkwardly. He fully understood and supported Mike’s decision not to tell his parents they were dating, but he felt a little uncomfortable sneaking around Mike’s house with his sister covering for them. His misgivings were forgotten, however, when he knocked on the door and pushed it open. Mike jumped, but relaxed when he saw who it was, and carried on buttoning his shirt.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to startle you,” Will ventured, feeling guilty.

“Don’t worry about it, you’re just earlier than I expected. Not that I’m disappointed,” he added hastily. Will rolled his eyes affectionately before crossing the room to hug Mike. “You look nice.”

“Thanks,” smiled Will. “I tried to make an effort.” Mike frowned at the familiar phrasing.

“Is this a date?” he asked, lowering his voice. Will shrugged, sitting down on the bed.

“I wondered if it could be. I know,” he continued when Mike’s eyebrows twitched a fraction closer together, “the others’ll be there, but I figured it’ll probably be our only opportunity this week. Besides, we’ll be in the city, not in Hawkins.” Mike considered this, before nodding and smiling nervously.

“I’m sorry I’m so paranoid,” he said in a small voice. Will shook his head firmly.

“No, we talked about this. It’s okay, Mike.” He paused for a moment.

“I mean, obviously I wish we didn’t have to hide.”

“Me too.”

“But I realise that’s just the way it has to be. Someday things will be different, but this is how it is at the moment. And I’m happy,” he said, pulling Mike down to sit next to him. “Really happy.” He closed his eyes and kissed Mike. Mike’s hands moved to Will’s waist, and Will’s moved to Mike’s cheeks. They became lost in each other, Will running his hands through Mike’s hair, and Mike slipping a hand

under Will's shirt. They broke apart when Mike involuntarily sighed out loud, freezing as they listened for footsteps on the landing, before collapsing into laughter, Mike's face crimson with embarrassment. Suddenly there was a knock, and Mike got up to answer the door. El stood there, looking bemused.

"I was not aware either of you was this funny," she said drily, one eyebrow arched, which started Will off again. Still chuckling, Mike pulled on the sweater which Max said was hideous but Will said he liked, shoved his wallet in his pocket and grabbed his car keys.

"Kay, let's get out of here."

Twenty minutes later, they were driving into a multi-storey parking lot next to the largest mall in the city. "Okay, keep your eyes out for a space," Mike frowned as he swung the car up the first ramp.

"It's Black Friday, it'll be packed," said Will anxiously. "I knew we should have come earlier."

"Was that a space?" Mike glanced to his left, but couldn't see. El looked out of the rear windshield.

"No, it's a staircase."

"Shit. Never mind, keep looking." They climbed four levels with no success.

"There, look, someone's leaving!" Will pointed ahead. "No, wait, they're just straightening up. Sorry, Mike." On the penultimate level, they finally found a space that was unoccupied.

"Mine," said Mike firmly, spinning the steering wheel so he could reverse in.

"Hope the others have better luck," remarked El as Mike locked the car and they wandered towards the elevator. But as they stepped off, Max, Lucas and Dustin were all stood by the ticket machine.

"Congratulations," said Mike, impressed, until he noticed Lucas' car

barely twenty feet from where they were standing. “How the hell did you do that?”

“Someone pulled out as we were coming in,” Dustin answered.

“Come on then,” said El, growing impatient.

“Can we hit the food court first?” Dustin asked. “I’m starving.”

“I’ll catch you guys up,” said Mike. “I have to sort my ticket.” Everyone but Will started to head off, chatting. “You don’t have to wait with me.” Will gave Mike a withering look.

“I know I don’t *have* to. I *want* to.” He fumbled with the machine and put a few coins in, before frowning at the ticket. “Something wrong?”

“No,” said Mike, tucking it his wallet. “Let’s go.” He took a deep breath before offering Will his hand. Mildly surprised, Will took it, smiling up at his boyfriend. Mike smiled nervously down at him before they set off together.

They wandered towards the food court together. Will had to stop Mike from flipping off the old couple who turned up their noses at them, but otherwise there were no incidents. Dustin had already bought a cheeseburger and was halfway through it.

“It’s not even noon,” Will said in disbelief.

Dustin shrugged. “Bite me.”

“Where are we going first?” Lucas asked.

“Third floor’s the clothing stores,” suggested El. Dustin and Lucas groaned, and even Mike wrinkled his nose.

“Well, El, Will and I are going,” said Max, “so that means Mike and Lucas are coming too.”

“Which,” continued El, “means that you, Dustin, can come with us or go off like a loner.”

"Sweet. Later," said Dustin, turning on his heels, but Lucas caught the back of his bomber jacket.

"Nope. If I'm going you're definitely coming with me." Mike gave Will a pleading look.

"Your choice after. Come on, I'd like some new clothes." He smiled at Mike in the way that he knew would get him whatever he wanted, and Mike caved.

"Fine. But we are definitely going to the video store afterwards."

"Done and done," Will grinned, squeezing his hand.

It turned out to be considerably more enjoyable than they'd expected. Will didn't find anything he wanted, so he and Mike mostly wandered around the men's clothing department laughing at how ridiculous some of the items were. Dustin and Lucas hovered near the suits. "Way to pretend to be classy, boys," Max called loudly to them as she joined Mike and Will. "Everything downstairs sucks but El's in her element. Any body-warmers up here?"

"Yeah, over by the elevator," said Will. "I'll come too, there's a nice one I've had my eye on." When they got there, Will showed her a bottle-green body-warmer.

"Nice," she nodded. "Try it on." Will shrugged off the navy one he was wearing, handed it to Mike and put on the green one. Max's eyes lit up. "I mean, it doesn't go with that shirt but hell yeah, you should totally get it, Byers. Brings out your eyes," she added as an afterthought. *Damn*, thought Mike. *She's right*.

"I don't know," Will said, trying to brush it off.

"Why not?" Mike piped up.

"Because it's twenty-six dollars," said Will, clearly flustered. Max glanced at the tags as Will put his back on its hanger.

"Shit, they're all expensive. Screw that," she said, disgusted.

"I'll get it for you," Mike said quietly.

"Don't you dare," Will said sharply. "It's not worth that much."

"Sure?"

"Completely. It's way too much." As they got on the escalator to find El, Mike glanced back and saw something that interested him.

"Okay, Bloomingdales next?" El said.

"No," chorused the four boys. Wounded, El looked to Max for support.

"One was enough," she shrugged.

"Et tu, Brute?" El saw she was beaten. "Fine," she sighed.

"Video store, then lunch," said Mike firmly.

"Agreed," nodded Lucas.

"I have to use the bathroom, I'll see you there," Mike added.

"Good for you," said Lucas. "We'll be on the second floor," he called after him. "Funny," he said quietly to Max. "He wasn't going anywhere near the restrooms."

"Okay," said Mike, sounding hesitant. Will looked round from the shelf he was browsing to see Mike holding something behind his back. "I know you said not to but –"

"You did not," Will said incredulously. Mike held out a plastic carrier bag with the logo of the shop they had just been in. Will stared at him in disbelief.

"It was on sale," Mike began.

"No, it wasn't!"

“Not when you looked at it,” Mike said hurriedly. “But as we left I saw a store assistant putting extra labels on some items on that rack, so I went back to see if this was on sale, and it was.”

“Mike, I don’t care.” Will never shouted when he was cross; now his voice was dangerously low. “I told you not to buy it for me, because I didn’t want you to buy it for me.”

“So I’m not allowed to get you gifts?” Mike was getting angry.

“If you buy something you think I’ll like, it’s a gift, and that makes me happy,” Will shot back. “If, however, you buy something I’ve said I cannot afford, then it’s charity, and that makes me feel like shit.”

“Look, I understand,” Mike started.

“No, Mike, you don’t. You’ve never been poor in your life. Ninety-five percent of the time I have no problem with the fact that you have more money than me, but stuff like this is fucking mortifying. I want you to take it back.”

“But...”

“Take. It. Back,” Will repeated through gritted teeth. “Or don’t. Keep it if you want. Whatever.” He stormed past Mike and disappeared out of the store before Mike could fully register what had just happened. The other four exchanged glances and had a silent argument between themselves. Once the flurried hand gestures finished, Lucas went cautiously over to Mike.

“You okay, man?” Mike nodded numbly. In eighteen months of dating, he and Will had never had an argument that had been so heated.

“I... need to take this back,” he said, looking up for the first time from where Will had been standing.

“You want me to come?” Lucas ventured.

“Sure. Thanks.”

“You want to talk about it?” Lucas asked as they left the store.

"I just thought he'd be pleased," he said heavily. "I didn't realise it would bother him that much."

"Did he tell you not to get it or something?"

"Well, yeah. But I thought he meant he didn't want to, I don't know, put me out or something." He paused for thought. "And he didn't have to be such an ass about it," he muttered.

"Maybe," said Lucas. "But I guess I see his point. Will's the youngest in his family, and he's quite little. Did you know that for most of high school most of his clothes were yours and Jonathan's hand-me-downs?"

"Mine?" Mike was shocked. How had he not noticed?

"Yeah, and it really bothered him, but he didn't want to bring it up because he didn't want to make you uncomfortable. He almost never gets anything new. You, on the other hand: your family's well-off, you're the oldest boy in your family, and you're like six inches taller than him. And that's not your fault," he added hastily. "And he doesn't hold it against you. But can you see why it would upset him?"

"Actually, yeah." Mike felt a sudden sense of urgency. "Thank you," he said sincerely. "Can you do me a solid and return this? The receipt's in the bag." He shoved it unceremoniously into Lucas' hands and ran off towards the elevator and hit the button for the top floor.

He stepped off the elevator into the food court and immediately saw Will, stirring a massive cup of dark coffee. When he saw Mike, he shot him a murderous look and tossed the plastic spoon perfectly into the trash can six feet away. Mike approached Will and gestured to the bench on which he was sitting.

"This seat taken?" he asked, attempting a smile.

"Unfortunately not," was the reply. Mike forced himself not to get annoyed. *Apology. Focus.* He sat down and looked Will in the eyes.

"I'm so sorry," he said, as genuinely as he could. "I had no idea you

felt that way. I just thought you were being polite, and I genuinely thought it would make you happy. I was wrong, and I'm sorry." Will was silent for a moment before speaking.

"I know," he said quietly. "And I'm sorry, actually. Deep down I knew you didn't mean it in the way I said it, and you're right, I never told you how I felt, so how could you have known? And I definitely shouldn't have gotten as angry as I did. I guess I was jealous, really, and that's so not okay." He sipped his coffee. "I can't believe I ruined our date by being such an asshole," he muttered into the cup, and tutted as the steam misted his glasses.

"Hey," Mike said, gently taking them off and wiping the lenses on his handkerchief. "Come on. It's just us," he said, gesturing round. "It needn't be ruined. I saw a comic book store on the first floor which I know for a fact Dustin, Lucas and Max don't know about. Want to go there?" Will smiled and stood up. For the second time that day, Mike offered Will his hand, and once again, Will took it. "Love you," Mike murmured as he leaned over and kissed Will's head, making him blush. Another couple scowled at them from a nearby table, and this time Mike couldn't resist. "The fuck are you looking at, perverts?"

"Mike," hissed Will, but he was laughing quietly all the way to the elevator.

An hour or so later, they caught up with the rest of the Party, whose faces showed obvious relief when they saw them approaching holding hands and laughing.

"You good now?" Dustin asked, and Max punched him solidly in the upper arm. "Ouch!"

"Tact, Henderson," she hissed.

"I meant what I said though," he said, looking at Mike and Will with concern. "Are you guys okay?"

"We're fine." Will squeezed Mike's hand. "Did you all eat yet?"

El shook her head. "We wanted to wait for you."

“Yeah,” added Dustin. “We missed you.”

“Cute,” said Max, totally deadpan. “Come on, I’m starving.”

“Mike,” said Lucas, dropping his voice, “they wouldn’t let me return it. It was the same store clerk and apparently it’s too obvious I’m not you.”

“I’ll take it once we’ve eaten,” sighed Mike.

“How much was it?” asked Will.

“With the sale? Seven dollars,” Mike answered nervously.

“You know what? What the hell,” he said, taking the bag off him. “But I’m buying your lunch.”

“Deal.” He held up a hand and Will high-fived him. “I’ll take the lobster with a bottle of your finest champagne.” Will wrinkled his nose.

“You have terrible taste.”

“Impossible. I chose you,” Mike countered. Will felt his ears turn red, but he was pretty sure that holding Mike’s hand would make him feel better.

Author's Note:

As always, thanks for reading!

Please leave kudos if you liked it and comments are always appreciated. Or you can hit me up on my Tumblr, @teaforoneplease!